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THE SECRET OF HEGEL.*

Μάντιν ἢ ἰητῆρα κακῶτ—

—— οὗτοι γὰρ κλητοὶ γε βορῶν ἐπ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν.

WE cannot congratulate Mr. Stirling upon the motto which he has chosen for his work : “ A prophet, or a healer of ills . . . for such men are welcome throughout the boundless earth.” Is Hegel well received in all quarters of the globe? Certainly not, says Mr. Stirling himself, for no one except Mr. Stirling appears to understand him. Is Hegel a healer of ills? It appears to us, on the contrary, that Hegel would be the worst possible physician who could minister to a mind diseased. After him, as after Prometheus, *nova februm terris incubuit cohors*, and especially brain fever in all its forms. And the penalty which has followed upon the fulfilment of his destiny by Hegel has been greater in proportion to the benefit than that which followed upon the fulfilment of the destiny of Prometheus. Endless blessings followed for all mankind when Prometheus drew down fire from the skies ; but who, except Mr. Stirling, can tell us what benefit was conferred upon us when Hegel raised a fog from the earth? A prophet too—a seer ! says Mr. Stirling. Well, perhaps this epithet is the least inappropriate. The prophet makes obscurity a part of his trade, and his followers may interpret him in any way they please. There are commonly as many different interpretations of the meaning of a prophet as there are different interpreters ; and Hegel is no exception to the rule. Mr. Stirling is the last, and therefore, for the time being perhaps, the most infallible interpreter of Hegel ; but oh, for an interpreter of Mr. Stirling !

It may possibly be said that this is a very flippant and unbecoming manner of treating a conscientious attempt to expound so great a thinker as Hegel. But we do not believe that such an objection will be raised by any Englishman who has made a conscientious attempt to understand Hegel and to compare his doctrines with those of an opposite school. It does not become us to be cowed by a name ; it does not become us to accept obscurity as identical with clearness and depth of thought. If Hegel has indeed a meaning, let us try to drag it out from the chaotic diction in which it is buried ; but if we tear away mountain after mountain of verbiage and find nothing when all is done, let us not be afraid to proclaim the fact.

* *The Secret of Hegel: being the Hegelian System in Origin, Principle, Form, and Matter.* By James Hutchinson Stirling. London : Longmans. 1865,

It has often been said that it is as unjust to find fault with the jargon of the German philosophers as it would be to find fault with the technical language or symbols of the mathematicians. But the two cases are no more parallel than are the two halves of one straight line. The mathematicians always tell us what they mean by their terms and their symbols, while Mr. Stirling considers it a merit in Hegel that he leaves us to find out the meaning of all his terms for ourselves.

"Here it is," says Mr. Stirling, "that we have one of the most peculiar and admirable of the excellences of Hegel; his words are such and so that they *must* be understood as he understands them, and difference there can be none. In Hegel thing and word arise together, and must be comprehended together. A true definition, as we know, is that which predicates both the *proximum genus* and the *differentia*: now the peculiarity of the Hegelian terms is just this—that their very birth is nothing but the reflexion of the *differentia* into the *proximum genus*—that at their very birth, then, they arise in a perfect definition. This is why we find no dictionary and so little explanation of terms in Hegel; for the book itself is that dictionary; and *how* each term comes, *that* is the explanation; each comes forward, indeed, as it is wanted and where it is wanted, and just so, in short, that it is no mere term, but the thought itself."

This lucid passage at once rouses the suspicion that there may possibly be many equivocal terms in Hegel's writings, and that they may lead to some fallacious reasonings. Still, we did not expect to find on the very next page of Mr. Stirling's book the following confession:—

"Another difficulty turns on this word, *Vorstellung*, which we have just used. A *Vorstellung* is a sort of sensuous thought; it is a symbol, a metaphor, as it were; an externalisation of thought; or *Vorstellung*, as a whole, is what we commonly mean by conception, imagination, the association of ideas, etc. . . . Then, the process itself, as a whole, is also nameable *Vorstellung* in general."

Still less did we expect to find such a damaging admission as this:—

"Again these terms [*An sich, an ihm selber, an ihm*] will occur in Hegel, not always in their technical senses, but sometimes with various shades, and very much as they occur in other writers. It must be confessed, indeed, that it is these little phrases which constitute the torment of every one who attempts to translate Hegel."

To put the matter more clearly—Mr. Stirling having, in his first volume, lauded Hegel to the skies for the exquisite clearness of his terms, is compelled in the second volume to complain of their ambiguity.

And here we believe is the true secret of Hegel. Mr. Stirling never distinctly tells what the "secret" is; he bids us read Hegel

again and again, and so find out for ourselves. But in our opinion the secret is simply this. Hegel never distinctly realised to himself the meaning of his jargon, and so fell into a series of fallacies through the use of equivocal terms. It was perhaps a misfortune for Hegel that he was born in Germany. Though the German language is probably a reflex of the German mind, it is not impossible that the habit of speaking French or English from his infancy might have placed the writings of Hegel within the class intelligible, might have made him the founder of a school, or might have altogether deterred him from writing metaphysics. The cumbrous German language affords fatal facilities for fallacies; the numerous different shades of meaning of which most German words are susceptible render the use of equivocal terms inevitable even to the most careful and conscientious writers. But when a German goes out of his way, as Hegel does, to found scientific arguments upon far-fetched verbal resemblances, he nips in the bud any faint expectations that he may have raised of philosophical accuracy.

As an example of verbal illustration or argument we quote the following passage from Mr. Stirling's translation of Hegel on Quality:—

"The *Qualirung* or *Inqualirung* (the Agonising or Inagonising, inward pain-ing, pang-ing, throe-ing),—an expression of Jacob Böhme—of a Philosophy that goes into the *Deep*, but a troubled deep,—signifies the movement of a quality (the *sour*, *bitter*, *fiery*, etc.) in its own self, so far as it in its negative nature (in its *Qual*, its pang) expresses and affirms itself through Other—signifies in general the Unrest of the Quality in itself, by which it produces and maintains itself only in conflict."

Any one to whom Hegel may first introduce himself by this sentence will probably be unable to discover anything in it of which he can feel certain except the play upon the two German words *Qual* and *Qualität*. But we do not believe that Hegel could introduce himself in any more intelligible or appropriate way. We find ourselves here plunged *in medias res*. In this one sentence are the principal features of Hegel's philosophy—not exaggerated or distorted, but rather softened and flattered; those features are not here beaten into one formless mass as they sometimes appear after a terrible conflict with the Indeterminate, but rather as the features of a pugilist who has fairly recovered from one defeat and is prepared for another.

Mr. Stirling assures us that the right way to enter upon the study of Hegel is to read that portion of the "Complete Logic" which treats of "Quality" until it becomes intelligible. We, therefore, set to work upon this same "Quality," resolved not indeed to understand it, but either to understand it or to know why it could not be understood. And we believe that we are now able to shew why it is unintelligible.

The sentence with which "Quality" begins is this:—"Being is the

indefinite *immediate*; it is devoid of definiteness as in reference to essentia, as also of any which it might possibly have within itself. This reflexion-less Being is Being as it is only in its own self." Let no one be deterred from reading on because it is difficult to understand what Hegel means by Being, because it is impossible to have any idea of that which has no qualities. Hegel explains further on: "the question of *How* belongs itself to the erroneous ways of Reflexion, which demands comprehensibility, but at the same time presupposes its own fixed categories, and consequently feels itself armed in advance against the reply to its own question." We were at first inclined to suspect that Mr. Stirling had made some mistake in the translation; but, to do him justice, in this and in other cases in which we have referred to the original, we have found him as scrupulously accurate as the case would permit. Hegel does distinctly say that we must not demand comprehensibility (*Begreiflichkeit*) that we are not to ask for any clear conception, any image of the matters about which we are to reason.

Remembering this philosophical dogma, we may pass on to what Hegel says about Nothing: "*Nothing, pure Nothing*; it is simple equality with itself, perfect vacancy, determinationlessness and *intentlessness* [formlessness and matterlessness]." And then we come to the great Principle of Hegel's system, "*Pure Being and pure Nothing is therefore the same.*" Now we must remark that we cannot see how the conclusion follows from the premises. Pure Being and Pure Nothing, as we understand the statement, are identical because both are without qualities or attributes, or as Hegel says determinateness. Let us throw the argument into the form of a syllogism:—

Pure Being is without attributes;

Pure Nothing is without attributes;

Therefore Pure Being and Pure Nothing are identical.

In order to avoid technical terms, let us construct another syllogism on the same principle by way of exposing the fallacy:—

Snow is white,

White hot coals are white,

Therefore snow and white hot coals are identical.

But there is another, and perhaps more plausible way of stating the argument:—

When we think of pure Nothing we cease to think;

When we think of pure Being we cease to think;

Therefore pure Being and pure Nothing are identical.

As a companion to the above syllogism we suggest the following:—

When we inhale chloroform we cease to think;

When we get a hard knock on the head we cease to think;

Therefore chloroform and a hard knock on the head are identical.

And on the same principle it might be shown not only that these two

are identical with one another, but that they are also identical with Pure Being and Pure Nothing.

But Hegel was not really misled by the fallacy in the latter form ; he was saved from that by another fallacy depending upon language and upon the peculiar character either of the German language or of the German mind. It is a marked peculiarity of Germans to emphasise their words far more than either Englishmen or Frenchmen. Accordingly Hegel is constantly reminding us that we must place the accent here, and not there, there and not elsewhere ; and in many of his sentences he informs us that the accent is to be placed on the copula, not on the predicate. "Nothing," he tells us, "is thought, nothing is represented (conceived), it is spoken of ; it *is* therefore. Nothing has in thought, representation, speech, etc., its Being." In this passage we believe that the meaning and the error of Hegel's fundamental doctrine are apparent. We have once before had occasion to point out the same error when made by a far greater man than Hegel. In that case the error was a mere slip so introduced as not to vitiate the whole work. In this case it is the corner stone of a rotten edifice. It is obvious that, if Nothing exists because it is spoken about, centaurs, ghosts, fairies, men with tails, mermaids, sirens, one-eyed giants, and anything that anyone likes to invent, must exist on the same principle. And this theory is apparent throughout the whole of Hegel's argument. He does not say that the perception of pure Being or of pure Nothing is the negation of perception ; he says that each *is* perception though he prefixes the epithets pure and void. When he draws an illustration from light and darkness—representing Being as pure light, Nothing as pure darkness—he does not say that in each case we should be equally unable to see, but that "the one seeing as much as the other seeing *is* pure seeing—seeing of Nothing." We may, perhaps, travel on "the erroneous ways of Reflexion" so far as to suggest that the destruction of the optic nerves would have the same effect as "pure darkness." The destruction of the optic nerves is therefore the surest road to pure seeing. Whether any Hegelian philosopher will adopt this method of obtaining a view of Pure Nothing which is Pure Being, we cannot predict ; but before he tries the experiment we take the liberty of recommending him to consider seriously whether there may not after all be a difference between seeing and not seeing, and whether the "seeing of Nothing" may not be a synonym for the loss of sight. We do not ourselves pretend to know anything about either pure Being or pure Nothing, but we are too obtuse, too un-Hegelian to see that the imposition of an accent upon the word "*is*" can be sufficient to prove the existence of either, still less the identity of one with the other. And although Pure Being and Pure Nothing are in a sense one to us, inas-

much as we know no more of one than of the other, we have not the vanity to suppose that our ignorance is knowledge transcending the powers of other men. We do not suppose an inhabitant of Jupiter to be an inhabitant of Venus because we know nothing about either, nor can we suppose Being (whatever that may be) to be Nothing (whatever that may be) for a similar cause. In short, we decline (for sufficient reasons, as we believe) to accept the fundamental principle of Hegel.

Philosophers have ere now declined to accept that dogma for reasons different from those given above. "Being," they have said, "and Nothing are the same thing ; it is, *therefore*, the same thing whether I am or am not, whether this house is or is not, whether three hundred dollars are or are not in my possession." To this Hegel answers fairly enough, "Such inference or such application of the proposition alters its sense completely. The proposition contains the pure abstractions of Being and Nothing ; the application, on the other hand, makes of these a determinate Being and determinate Nothing. But, as has been said, the question here is not of determinate Being." A philosopher has, of course, a perfect right to draw such a distinction as this, and to complain if his adversaries ignore it. But, on the other hand, his adversaries, if unable to admit the argument about pure Being, have a right to use their own weapons when the war is carried into their own domain—that of the Determinate. By all means let Hegel be monarch of all he surveys while he remains in the region of pure Being, and pure Nothing ; those revolutions have little interest for us in which, according to him, Being and Nothing alternately come uppermost, and yet remain identical ; we cannot say that Hegel's revelation is not true ; we can only say that Hegel has not shewn it to be true, and that it matters not to us whether it be true or false. But we watch with a jealous eye for the introduction of manners and customs from this unknown, this hypothetical realm into the better known and free land of the Determinate—of the Concrete.

Hegel's disclaimer is a disclaimer only for the time being. In the domain of pure Being and pure Nothing diplomacy seems to be not unknown. When hard pressed, Hegel declares that the identity of Being and Nothing applies only to pure and indeterminate Being and Nothing ; when the danger is passed, both Hegel and his disciple, Mr. Stirling, deliberately make the same assertion about the Determinate. "Hegel," Mr. Stirling tells us, "came to see that there exists no concrete which consists not of two antagonistic characters, where, at the same time, strangely, somehow, the one is not only through the other, but actually is this other." A truly startling statement ! We might possibly reconcile ourselves to the theory that this side of Nowhere is the same as the other side of Nowhere, because the geographical

position of Nowhere has not been accurately ascertained, and because we have no particular interest in the district. But when we are told that the north side of Fleet-street is the south side, and that each is itself and the other at the same time, the matter becomes more serious. A confident and impatient man might, perhaps, fling the book away at once with a laugh. A more diffident man might, perhaps, walk into Fleet-street and ask impartial passengers for their topographical opinions. And an inquisitive man having thus satisfied himself that his wits had gone no further astray than those of the average Englishman, might set himself to inquire how any man could have arrived at the Hegelian point of view.

And here again we must remark that we do not think Mr. Stirling has misrepresented Hegel. Hegel does state that every concrete is its other, and attempts to establish that position by the most curious argument we ever met with. In order to shew that there can be no mistake about the application of this argument, we quote first the following distinct statement of Hegel's :—

“There-Being* is definite, determinate Being ; its determinateness, definiteness, is beënt determinateness, beënt definiteness, Quality—Through its quality is it that Something is,—and as in opposition to Another.”

“There-Being” then is this “determinate” Being to which we were told in the passage before quoted the identity with Nothing would not apply. Though Being is the same as its Other, Nothing, and *vice versa*, the principle, we were told, was not to be applied to “There-being” (Daseyn). What then was our astonishment when we read the Chapter on “There-being” and found the following :—

“1. Something and Other are both in the first place, There-beënt or Something. 2. Each is equally an Other. It is indifferent which is first named Something ; and just because it is *first* named is it Something. . . .

“At the same time, as has been remarked, even for conception (representation) every There-being is distinguishable as an other There-being, and there remains not any one There-being that were distinguishable only as a There-being, that were not without or on the outside of a There-being, and, therefore, that were not itself an Other. Both are equally determined as Something and as Other, consequently *as the same thing*, and there is so far no distinction of them.” The italics, be it remarked, are not ours.

If we take “Both” to mean any one “There-being” and any one “Other”, as we suppose we must take them, the argument is this :—

A (any one “There-being”) is Something and Other ;

B (any one “Other”) is Something and Other ;

Therefore *A* is the same as *B*.

* “There-Being” is Mr. Stirling’s translation of *Daseyn*.

It is hardly necessary to point out that there is a double fallacy in this reasoning. In the first place, if the terms were unequivocal, a precisely similar syllogism would suffice to shew as before that snow is the same as white hot coals. In the second place the term "Other" is monstrously equivocal. *A* may be the north side of Fleet-street and so an Other as opposed to the south, while *B* may be the Sun as opposed to, or the Other of, the rest of the universe. It will then follow from the argument that the north side of Fleet-street and the Sun are one and the same thing.

But let us try to be more charitable to Hegel, and concede that, although he has not taken pains to be verbally accurate, he, of course, did not intend the word Other to be equivocal; that if he intended to speak of *A* as an Other, he also intended to limit the signification of the term Other strictly to *A* and its correlate, which we may call *B*. *A* is the other of *B*, *B* the other of *A*. Be it so; then if *A* and *B* are the same thing, the north and the south sides of Fleet-street are identical.

But, it will be said, Hegel could never have gone so far wrong as this; there must be some other possible interpretation of his meaning. And there is another possible interpretation. Hegel may have meant to say that "Something and Other" is a complete definition of the term "There-being", and also a complete definition of the term "Other", and that the two terms are therefore synonymous. But what a lame and impotent conclusion is this; when we look for an inference we find only a definition just as when we looked for definitions we were sent empty away. We nevertheless believe that Hegel had some such meaning as this, with a most unwarrantable *arrière pensée* attached to it. He wished us to believe that what is true of a word is true of that which is signified by the word—or, to use more forcible if more technical language, that all things which may be denoted by any connotative term are identical. There is nothing, he seems to imply, to which you can apply the predicate "There-being" to which you cannot also apply the predicate "Other"; and, conversely, there is nothing to which you can apply the predicate "Other" to which you cannot also apply the predicate "There-being"; therefore, anything which has the predicate There-being applied to it is identical with anything which has the predicate Other applied to it. Let us, as before, illustrate the absurdity by a similar argument. Let "mortal" and "certain to die" be synonymous terms; then those things of which "mortal" may be predicated are the same as those of which "certain to die" may be predicated; "mortal" may be predicated of men, and "certain to die" of horses; therefore men are identical with horses.

And Hegel apparently did mean to state something more than that

the two terms "there being" and "other" are synonymous. The passage immediately following that which we last quoted, affords evidence that Hegel supposed himself to be dealing with something more than mere words:—

"*This self-sameness* of the determinations, however, falls only into outer Reflexion, into the *comparing* of both; but as the *Other* is at present constituted it is *per se* the Other, in reference, indeed, to the Something, but it is *per se* the Other also *outside of*, apart from the Something. Thirdly, therefore, the Other may be taken as isolated in reference to its own self; *abstractly* as the Other; the τὸ ἕτερον of Plato, who supposes it to be the One as one of the moments of Totality, and in this manner ascribes to *the Other* a special nature. But thus *the Other*, taken as such, is not the Other of Something, but the Other in itself, that is, the Other of itself."

Let us not pretend that we understand the above passage; we quote it, partly in order that we may not be accused of suppressing the context of the previous passage, and partly because Hegel seems to be giving some account of things, rather than, or in addition to, a definition of terms. It will be seen, upon reference to the first passage quoted in this review, that in Hegel's philosophy there appears to be a mysterious trinity—the Thing, the Word, and the Thought—in which we are unable to divide the substance, though Hegel apparently confounds the persons. We do not deny the existence of such a trinity; but we must remark that if, in the Hegelian philosophy, there is no difference between thinking a man a fool, calling him a fool, and being a fool oneself, we hope no true Englishmen will become converts.

We believe, then, that Hegel has been, and is likely to be, unintelligible, because he is continually led astray by mere words—because he does not take sufficient pains to distinguish between words and the things that are denoted by them. Hegel, we believe, was not, as Mr. Stirling asserts, a master of language, but language was rather the master of Hegel. And his obscurity is to be attributed not simply to his technical terms; perhaps not more to his terms than to his utter ignorance of the arts of diction. In confirmation of this opinion, we quote a passage from the original German, which Mr. Stirling himself admits is "curiously tangled":—

"Das Umschlagen des Nichts durch seine Bestimmtheit (die vorhin als ein Daseyn im Subjecte, oder in sonst was es sey, erschien) in ein Affirmatives, erscheint dem Bewusstseyn, das in der Verstandes-Abstraktion feststeht, als das Paradoxeste; so einfach die Einsicht ist, oder auch wegen ihrer Einfachheit selbst erscheint die Einsicht, dass die Negation der Negation Positives ist, als etwas Triviales, auf welches der stolze Verstand daher nicht zu achten brauche, obgleich die Sache ihre Richtigkeit habe,—und sie hat nicht nur diese Richtigkeit, sondern um der Allgemeinheit solcher Bestimmungen willen ihre unendl-

liche Ausdehnung und allgemeine Anwendung, so dasz wohl darauf zu achten wäre."

This sentence, we believe, is truly Hegelian; it is a sentence in which we vainly endeavour to drive the *anacoluthon* to the end, just as in Hegel's train of reasoning we vainly endeavour to drive the *non sequitur* to the end of a paragraph. Whose fault is it, we ask, that the writer of such a sentence as the last quoted is unintelligible—that of the reader or of the writer? Are we to be told that the man who cannot see his way clearly to the end of a sentence, can see his way clearly through a long train of reasoning? Are we to be told that this ungrammatical German is a better guide in philosophy than our British writers, whose style is as clear as their thoughts? And yet this is what Mr. Stirling would have us believe—Mr. Stirling, who can give us no better account of the "Secret of Hegel" than the following:—

"The secret of the universe is thought, the spirit of thought, whose own life is the play of what is, and that which is, is thought in its own freedom, which at the same time also is its own necessity. The absolute is the vibration of a mathematical point, the tinted tremble of a single eye, infinitesimally infinite, punctually one, whose own tremble is its own object, and its own life, and its own self."

We regret that we are unable to explain what kind of absolute is the vibration of a mathematical point, etc.; for it is stated by Mr. Stirling, on behalf of Hegel, that there is more than one kind of absolute:—"Your Absolute and *your* Infinite may be, and I doubt not *are*, quite incomprehensible, for they are chimeras of your own pert self-will; whereas I confine myself to the realms of fact and the will of God. So, on such points, one might conceive Hegel to speak." But in what respect the tinted tremble of a single eye, or the vibration of a mathematical point, are more intelligible, we have failed to discover. Nay, our "pert self-will" prompts us to inquire in what realms of fact Mr. Stirling or Hegel discovered the vibration of a mathematical point, which is at the same time the tinted tremble of an infinitesimally infinite single eye. We should also like to know by what process either Hegel or Mr. Stirling ascertained the will of God in matters of philosophy.

But, it may be said, allow that there is any amount of absurdity in Hegel's writings, allow that he knew neither how to write nor how to reason, yet you must allow that he had some fundamental principle about which he attempted to reason and to write. If so, what was that principle? To this question we think we have discovered the answer, but it is very different from the answer given by Mr. Stirling. Hegel, we believe, just failed in grasping firmly the fundamental law

of relativity or discrimination ; and, having failed to grasp it, he tried to escape from it. Hegel and this law seem to us like two ancient wrestlers, whose bodies and limbs have been well oiled before the struggle. Hegel advances, apparently has the law in his grasp for a moment, but the next moment appears powerless and drops to the ground ; he gets up, skulks round the ring until he is forced to close once more, and then his adversary again eludes his grasp and trips him up ; and so on *ad infinitum*. Hegel's two hands, so to speak, are his "Something" and "Other"; but they are sadly clumsy hands to start with, and Hegel has no skill in the use of them ; he gets them into such awkward positions, that he soon forgets which is his right and which his left, and ends by believing that he has only one hand, which is right and left, and neither and both, all at once.

All that is true in Hegel's philosophy is the statement of the law of relativity—the law that whatever is known, is known only in its relation to other objects of knowledge, and in its relation to the knowing subject. But we do not hesitate to say, that the principle is worse stated by Hegel than it could possibly have been stated by any British psychologist. It is so badly stated, that it is impossible to believe it was ever fairly grasped by Hegel—so badly, that it leads Hegel himself to self-stultification. That Hegel never fairly comprehended this law, we believe we should be justified in asserting, if we had no other evidence than the single fact that he starts with dogmas and arguments about the indeterminate, whatever that may be. It is clear that, inasmuch as human reasoning must conform to the laws of human thought, which involve the perception of resemblances and differences, the reasoning about the indeterminate must involve resemblances. But no two things can resemble one another unless they possess similar attributes ; and yet, according to Hegel, "the Indeterminate" has no attributes, and every thing which has attributes is "determinate". It follows, then, that, in order to reason about "the Indeterminate", or that which has no attributes and stands in no relations, we must treat it precisely as if it had certain attributes and stood in certain relations. In order to be Hegelian, we must start with the assertion that what is beyond our understanding is not beyond our understanding. In this one proposition, we believe the whole Hegelian philosophy is summed up ; admit it, and you may admit anything else you please—that every thing is its other, that a man is his wife, that the obverse of a coin is the reverse, that the right hand is the left, that the outside of Bedlam is the inside. And here we should leave Hegel and his followers in general, had we not a word or two more to say about Mr. Stirling in particular.

Mr. Stirling tells us that he has devoted to the study of Hegel "a

greater number of years, and for a greater number of hours in each day of these years, than it is perhaps prudent to avow at present." There is something touching in this confession ; there is something in it which is at once manly and modest, and which prepossesses us in the writer's favour. Would that the general tone of Mr. Stirling's work were similar ! But, unfortunately, there is an arrogant assumption of superior knowledge, an exaltation of German intellect, of which Mr. Stirling is the sole exponent, at the expense of English intellect, of which Buckle is represented as the best type. In all things intellectual, Mr. Stirling tells us, we are surpassed by the Germans. Style is of course included ; and Mr. Stirling, partly perhaps unintentionally, but without doubt partly from a fixed resolve to imitate, has effectually Germanised his style. The following passage is a not unfair specimen both of his matter and of his style :—

"Hegel is more impervious than Kant ; yet still, despite the exasperation, the positive offence, which attends the reading of such exoteric works of his as have been attempted to be conveyed to the public in French or English, we see cropping occasionally to the surface in these, a meaningness of speech, a facility of manipulating, and of reducing into ready proportion, a vast number of interests which to the bulk of readers are as yet only in a state of instinctive chaos, and just on every subject that is approached, a general overmastering grasp of thought to which no other writer exhibits a parallel. In short, we may say that, as regards these great Germans, the general public carries in its heart a strange secret conviction, and that it seems even to its own self to wait on them with a dumb but fixed expectation of infinite and essential result."

Mr. Stirling is very hard upon the *Aufklärung*, the illumination or enlightenment—a name which he gives to the school of writers which we Englishmen commonly regard as intelligible. Macaulay and Buckle are Mr. Stirling's favourite examples. He objects to Macaulay, but Buckle is his abomination. No wonder ! The man who could write the above passage, need not tell us that he has an aversion to the light ; he need not tell us that he and the Germans are unlike Buckle and Macaulay ; he need not tell us that all Macaulay's and all Buckle's graces of style are thrown away on this ungainly imitator of a German hobbadehoy. And yet we are to unlearn all that we have learnt, in order that we may think and write like Hegel and Mr. Stirling. We are to give up our enlightenment, and with it, apparently, also our refinement. When an opponent has but just dropped down exhausted under the heavy weight of too vast a scheme, we are to spurn his remains, and vituperate him as follows :—

"He had a theory, had Mr. Buckle, or rather, a theory had him—a theory, it is true, small rather, but still a theory that to him loomed

huge as the universe, at the same time that it was the single drop of vitality in his own soul ;” and then in a more grandiloquent if not more intelligible strain, “If Mr. Buckle did penetrate the Germans, he found that there was nothing left him but to burn every vestige of that shallow enlightenment which, supported on such semi-information, on such weak personal vanity, amid such hollow *raisonnement*, and with such contradictory results, he had been tempted, so boyishly ardent, so vain-gloriously pompous, to communicate—to a world in many of its members so ignorant, that it hailed a crude, conceited boy (of formal ability, quick conscientiousness, and the *pang* of illumination,—inherited probably from antecedents somewhere) as a ‘vast genius’, and his work—a bundle of excerpts of mere illumination, from a bundle of books of mere illumination,—disposed around a ready-made presupposition of mere illumination—as a ‘magnificent contribution’ fruit of ‘vast learning’, and even ‘philosophy.’”

The first question which presents itself, when we meet with this tirade against enlightenment, is—what can Hegel or Mr. Stirling give us instead? They can give us, it appears, a crystal skeleton which is invisible. We are not anywhere informed in what respects an invisible skeleton is the better for being made of crystal :—

“Hegel, *in effect*, has only cleared relations of ideas into their *system*—that crystal skeleton which, the whole *truth* of the concrete, of sensuous affection, of matters of fact, underlies and supports the same. Of this, so to speak, invisible skeleton causality is but one of the bones.”

We think, indeed, that Mr. Stirling is a worthy disciple of Hegel ; and these two philosophers remind us of two celebrated works of art. There is, or was, a painting called “The Israelites crossing the Red Sea.” It was nothing more than a large red daub. The artist was asked for an explanation. “That’s the Red Sea”, said he. “But where are the Israelites?” “They are on the other side”. “And where is Pharaoh with his host?” “They are at the bottom”. The second work of art to which we refer is a photograph immortalised by Albert Smith. It was shewn to him by a friend. “But there is no picture here,” said Albert Smith. “Oh ! yes ! that’s Strasbourg Cathedral”. “Strasbourg Cathedral?” “Yes ; Strasbourg Cathedral at midnight”. “Nonsense, what do you mean?” “Why, if you went out at midnight and it was pitch-dark, you would not see it, would you?” “No”. “Very well ; that’s just what I did when I was at Strasbourg ; and I photographed the Cathedral in the dark, and there it is”.

Now it appears to us that Hegel has, as it were, painted the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, and that Mr. Stirling has taken a photograph of the picture in the dark. Hegel’s philosophy is a huge daub, in which there are no lights and shades except such as may reach it from the objects by which it is surrounded ; Mr. Stirling’s reproduction is paper and nothing more.

We think we cannot do better than conclude this review with one more very elegant extract from Mr. Stirling's preface ; it is not for us to suggest any application of the words :—

“An empty belly, when it is active, is adequate to the production of gripes ; and when an empty head is similarly active, what can you expect but gripes to correspond—convulsions namely, contortions of conceit, attitudinising, eccentric gesticulations in a wind of our own raising ? It were easy to name names and bring the criticism home ; but it will be prudent at present to stop here.”

THE SKULLS OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE CAROLINE ISLANDS.*

By one of those accidents which have led some ethnologists to imagine that the islands of the vast Pacific have actually been peopled, and which have been made to do service in the great system of “accidental philosophy”, a number of crania of the natives of the Caroline Archipelago came into the hands of those zealous cultivators of science, the Dutch medical officers of Java. As none of the Europeans who have visited this Archipelago had taken the pains to collect the skulls of the inhabitants, and thus nothing was known of their cranial conformation, great interest must be attached to the first description of these curious objects—which description has now been made by a most competent observer, Professor J. Van der Hoeven, of Leyden, the author of similar histories of the skulls of many other races.

In the year 1858 Capt. D. Herderschee, of the Dutch ship *Amsterdam*, sailing from Hong Kong to Melbourne, at a distance of ninety German miles from the Pellen (Pelew ?) Islands, met with a canoe containing twelve men and women. They were in great distress, famished and weak, so that they were almost reduced to skeletons, and were covered with vermin. Captain Herderschee took them on board his ship, and conveyed them to Batavia. Neither on shipboard, nor in this city, could their language be understood. With the exception of two, who had suffered the least, they were all sick when landed, and were sent to the Hospital. Three of these died immediately, and the rest soon afterwards ; indeed, only one of the twelve appears to have escaped. As the language they spoke could not be comprehended, there was some doubt as to their origin.† It was, nevertheless, concluded by Capt.

* *Beschrijving van Schedels ran Inboorlingen der Carolina-Eilanden*, door J. Van der Hoeven. 8vo, pp. 16, 2 pl. Amsterdam : 1865.

† Among the twelve islanders, some gave other names to the same objects, so that it is uncertain whether they were all derived from the same island.